

**1997 Annual Report of the  
Lake Michigan Coastal Coordination Program to the  
Natural Resources Commission**

**May 21, 1998  
Lafayette, Indiana**

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Map of the Shoreline</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Natural Resources Commission Resolution</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Resolution on Public Participation</b>	<b>5</b>
Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel on Lake Michigan Issues	<b>5</b>
<b>Resolution on Permit Simplification</b>	<b>6</b>
IDEM and DNR Sign Memorandum of Understanding for Permit Streamlining	<b>6</b>
Improving Communication with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	<b>6</b>
General Permit for Beach Nourishment Activities Used	<b>6</b>
<b>Resolution on Inter-Agency Coordination</b>	<b>7</b>
Lake Michigan Coastal Club- DNR Staff Get Involved	<b>7</b>
DNR and SEMA Discuss Coastal Hazards	<b>7</b>
National Healthy Beaches Symposium Held at Indiana Dunes State Park	<b>7</b>
Participation at Local Meetings	<b>8</b>
Public Presentations	<b>8</b>
<b>Resolution on Public Education</b>	<b>9</b>
Boating Safety and Education	<b>9</b>
Recreational Access to Lake Michigan	<b>9</b>
Outreach Materials	<b>9</b>
<b>Resolution on Determining Social and Environmental Needs</b>	<b>10</b>
Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel Sets Priorities	<b>10</b>
<b>Resolution on Innovative Solutions</b>	<b>11</b>
DNR Receives Coastal Zone Management Grant	<b>11</b>
Coastal Staff Attend National Meetings	<b>11</b>
Geographic Information System Developed for Shoreline Studies	<b>11</b> <b>12</b>

## **Introduction**

During 1997 the Lake Michigan Coastal Coordination Program achieved several successes. The DNR Director's Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel concluded with a strong recommendation on governmental coordination. A comprehensive Lake Michigan boating guide was prepared for the most heavily boated waters of the state. The Interagency Task Force on *E.coli* achieved state and national recognition for its efforts to promote healthy beaches along Indiana Lake Michigan coastline. And Indiana received a grant worth \$200,000 to explore participation in the federal coastal management program.

The Natural Resources Commission, by resolution, provides direction to coastal program efforts to include meaningful public participation; simplify governmental processes; coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies; prepare educational tools; assist Northwest Indiana citizens to identify and prioritize environmental needs; and use innovative methods to implement directives. The coastal program continues to illuminate coastal area issues identified through a public work group process and by other entities, and bring together those that have the ability to solve them.

## **Map of the Shoreline**

## Natural Resources Commission Resolution

## Resolution on Public Participation

“ . . .The Department of Natural Resources shall expand and enhance meaningful opportunities for public participation by citizens of Northwest Indiana in decision making relative to natural, cultural, commercial, and recreational resources. . . ”

### Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel on Lake Michigan Issues

The Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel held its final meeting in August 1997. During the twelve month period the Panel met, a wide range of topics pertaining to Lake Michigan were discussed. Ultimately, the Panel focused on the topic of governmental coordination and streamlining. Several resolutions were suggested by the Panel to promote enhanced governmental coordination.

The Panel was established by the DNR Director in 1996 to synthesize recommendations to address shoreline concerns, which were identified during a public work group process conducted in 1995. Many concerns raised by the public work groups related to the broad topic of governmental coordination and streamlining. The Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel directed most of its energy to the coordination of multiple permitting process associated with construction in navigable waterways.

The Coastal Coordination Program provided requested information to the Panel as the Panel studied current waterway permitting processes in Indiana, and reviewed methods used by other states for similar projects. A DNR Division of Water employee assisted the Panel with meeting facilitation.

After much discussion pertaining to improving coordination of the permitting process, the Panel developed the following resolution. “The Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel recommends that the Natural Resources Commission bring the following proposal to the Indiana Governor:

- (1) Implement a joint permit application for greater efficiency by:
  - (a) Involving all federal, state, and local regulating authorities.
  - (b) Assigning a work team to pursue joint applications.
- (2) Consolidate environmental permitting processes in the State of Indiana.”

Another resolution proposed by the Panel called for the development of an advisory board for the Lake Michigan Marina Development Commission so that issues raised by the public work groups could continue to be addressed. The following resolution was approved with the exception of one Panel participant. “We encourage the Lake Michigan Shoreline and Marina Development Commission to form an advisory group representing broad interests, and to develop a working relationship with that group, to ensure that input of all Northwest Indiana residents can be heard.”

The Panel also suggested putting the extensive background information compiled for the Panel in the document NORTHWEST INDIANA PUBLIC WORK GROUPS: A SYNTHESIS OF MAJOR TOPICS IN THE LAKE MICHIGAN COASTAL AREA, on the Internet for use by a larger audience.

## Resolution on Permit Simplification

"... the Department of Natural Resources shall seek to simplify and clarify permitting processes and incentive programs in Northwest Indiana. . ."

### **IDEM and DNR Sign Memorandum of Understanding for Permit Streamlining**

Following the development of a resolution regarding permit streamlining by the Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel, the Lieutenant Governor's office held a meeting to discuss permit coordination needs. The meeting included representatives of IDEM, the Natural Resources Commission, the Lake Michigan Coastal Coordination Program, and the Lake Michigan Marina Development Commission (LMMDC). The LMMDC had also adopted a resolution directed to permit streamlining.

The meeting participants agreed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between IDEM and DNR would form a foundation for better coordination of the waterway permit process. In addition, the MOU would establish a work group to explore alternatives such as joint permit applications to improve efficiency of the process.

The work group created by the MOU is to include three representatives of DNR and three representatives of IDEM. Two of the three representatives from each agency are to be intimately familiar with the permitting process of their respective agency. The third representative is to have a broader knowledge of the agency functions and directions. Advisory members are to include someone from an environmental group and someone from the regulated community. Invitations have been made to the Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel and the Lake Michigan Marina Development Commission for participation by a member of each organization.

### **Improving Communication with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Gary Manesto, Chief of the Regulatory Functions Branch of the U.S. Army Corps in Detroit, has communicated his interest in the MOU directed to permit streamlining. As reflected by Manesto in a December 1997 email, "When its appropriate to sit down and discuss joint application or any other initiative let me know. . . . [We in the Detroit District are] looking forward to continuing working on these much needed initiatives."

### **General Permit for Beach Nourishment Activities Used**

In 1996, the Coastal Coordination Program reported on efforts to assist the Natural Resources Commission in establishing a general permit for beach nourishment activities. Last year the US Army Corps of Engineers used the general permit for the placement of 53,000 cubic yards of sand at Mount Baldy. Additional beach nourishment by the Corps is planned to occur this year under the use of the general permit.



**Figure 1: Beach Nourishment at Mount Baldy**

## Resolution on Inter-agency Cooperation

". . .The Department of Natural Resources shall actively pursue improved communication and coordination within the agency and with other state, federal, and Northwest Indiana agencies and governmental units. . ."

### Lake Michigan Coastal Club - DNR Staff Get Involved Hazards

Multiple activities associated with Lake Michigan and its watershed in Indiana are either managed, or receive some level of participation, by DNR employees. The Lake Michigan Coastal Club continues to meet on the fourth Friday of each month to exchange information about the various initiatives in Northwest Indiana. The club also serves as a mechanism for project coordinators to obtain different perspectives on actions being considered to address coastal issues.

In addition to monthly meetings, the coastal club holds bi-annual meetings, one in Northwest Indiana and one in Indianapolis, to allow issues of interest to be explored in more detail. Last year, the club met in Michigan City to discuss the restoration efforts being carried forth by the Natural Resource Trustees near the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal; the role of the Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology in arresting the spread of exotic species at ports; Division of Forestry initiatives in the coastal area; and the salmon spawning in the East Chicago wastewater treatment facility. The club took its meeting to the field to observe the stream habitat and bank restoration project at Creek Ridge County Park.

The second bi-annual meeting was held in Indianapolis in December. Topics discussed by the club included geographic information system efforts by the DNR in Northwest Indiana; lake level fluctuations; and the natural resource damage assessment plan for the Grand Calumet River and Indiana Harbor Ship Canal area.

Both the Department of Natural Resources and the State Emergency Management Agency respond to emergency conditions relating to property owners due to storms and high lake levels along the Lake Michigan shoreline. The Coastal Coordination Program brought together representatives of the DNR and SEMA to discuss the coastal hazard situations on Lake Michigan and to identify the opportunities each agency has to address coastal hazards. The Coastal Program has suggested a coordinated plan be developed by DNR and SEMA to identify emergency procedures along the coastline.

### National Healthy Beaches Symposium Held at Indiana Dunes State Park

Healthy beaches continue to be a major initiative of the Coastal Coordination Program. The Interagency Task Force on *E. coli*, coordinated by the coastal program, met several times during 1997. In addition, the task force co-sponsored a National Healthy Beaches Symposium with the Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant Program in August at the Indiana Dunes State Park. The symposium drew approximately 90 participants from around the Great Lakes. The day-long event focused on topics such as consistency in sampling methods, sanitary discharge from boats, types *E. coli* bacteria, tracking sources of bacteria, impact of septic systems, and cooperative efforts to eliminate high levels of *E.coli* at beaches.

### DNR and SEMA Discuss Coastal



**Figure 2: Indiana Dunes State Park Pavilion**

The task force established four committees in 1997: (1) point source committee; (2) nonpoint source committee; (3) marine and other sources committee; and (4) monitoring methods committee. The point source committee established a voluntary network of wastewater treatment facilities and industries to conduct additional sampling in the tributaries of Lake Michigan. Over 70 sites are included in the network. A trial run of the sampling took place in October to facilitate sampling beginning in the spring of 1998. The marine and other sources committee began exploring the issues involved with sanitary disposal by commercial vessels in southern Lake Michigan. The committee enjoys broad participation from the shipping industries, federal and state boating enforcement agencies, and IDEM.

### **Participation in Local Meetings**

Attendance and participation at local meetings is an important aspect of coastal program functions. DNR Director Macklin appointed coastal program staff to represent the department on the Bethlehem Steel Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Bethlehem Steel has volunteered to establish a CAC to gather input on improving environmental

performance and community awareness of steel making processes under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Common Sense Initiative. EPA will use Bethlehem Steel's CAC as a pilot program to determine if other steel companies might use a similar mechanism to carry out the goals of the Common Sense Initiative. The coastal program served as chair of the environmental performance measures subcommittee of the CAC during 1997.

The coastal program represents the department at meetings of the Grand Calumet Area Partnership meetings. The Partnership is a voluntary coordinating body involving participants from several organizations and units of government. Focus of the Partnership is on providing increased communication among interested parties regarding restoration activities in the Grand Calumet River area.

### **Public Presentations**

Additionally, the coastal program seeks to foster improved communication through periodic presentations to various organizations. During 1997, the coastal program presented information about the program or a specific activity of the program to the Lake Michigan Marina Development Commission, the Indiana Water Resources Association, and the Great Lakes Commission. Coastal program staff also presented information on the Healthy Beaches Initiative and the work of the Interagency Task Force on *E. coli* at the 1997 Governor's Conference on the Environment.

## **Resolution on Public Education**

" . . .The Department shall develop new educational tools, including the preparation of manuals..."



## Boating Safety and Education

Through most of 1997, preparations continued on a document titled BOATING LAWS ON INDIANA WATERS OF LAKE MICHIGAN. The document is a result of a resolution adopted by the Lake Michigan Marina Development Commission



asking DNR to pursue several initiatives to improve boater safety and education. There are several laws governing boating that are unique to Lake Michigan. BOATING LAWS ON INDIANA WATERS OF LAKE MICHIGAN will help boaters know exactly which laws pertain to Lake Michigan, and also provides color images of navigational symbols and maps of shoreline features. Featured in the document is a listing of the top ten most violated boating laws on Lake Michigan. The information is now available at <http://www.ai.org/dnr/boating/>.

## Recreational Access to Lake Michigan

Strong interest was expressed during the 1995 public work groups regarding public access to Lake Michigan. Also in 1995, the Lake Michigan Marina Development Commission urged DNR through a resolution to provide better information on recreational amenities along the shoreline. The

coastal program provided the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation with federal funding, received through the Coastal Zone Management Act, to inventory and assess the recreational facilities and needs in the coastal area. A color guide is soon to be released. The guide includes color maps indicating the location of recreation sites and the amenities offered at the sites. Results of public meetings held by the division as well as of surveys conducted at public access sites provide insight to the desires of users and providers for recreation access and amenities in the coastal area. See **Figure 3** for examples of maps included in the guide.

## Outreach Materials

*Indiana Shorelines for Coastal Coordination* brought coastal news to a wide audience during 1997. Diverse topics were featured in the quarterly newsletter. Articles touched upon topics such as lake levels, navigable water rules, exotic species, brownfield revitalization, healthy beaches, natural areas, permit streamlining, fishing issues, natural resource damage assessments, local efforts in the Grand Calumet River area, public trust doctrine, and boating. Readers have forwarded several positive comments regarding the diversity and depth of the articles in *Shorelines*. Mailings have increased by 150 readers in the past year. Staff in the Division of Hearings provide editing support, and Division of Water staff provide graphics and layout design assistance.

In addition to the newsletter, the coastal program maintains a web site on the Internet to offer news about Northwest Indiana initiatives to interested people. The web site links several sources of information and allows readers to access documents that might not otherwise be readily available. Up-to-date meeting minutes are included on the website for a variety of groups. The coastal program homepage can be accessed at <http://www.dnr.state.in.us/lakemich/index.htm>.

## Resolution on Determining Social and Environmental Needs

" . . . The Department shall work with citizens of Northwest Indiana to help identify and prioritize social and environmental needs, particularly as they relate to the responsibilities of the Department. . . "

## Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel Sets Priorities

A priority of the Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel, as mentioned earlier in the annual report, is improved communication and cooperation among state and federal agencies, and applicants in association with the waterways permitting processes. The coastal program provided assistance as requested during the meetings as the Panel evaluated various coastal issues and analyzed the permitting process in Indiana and other states.

Background material explaining coastal issues, particularly those issues raised during the public

work groups during 1995, were researched by the coastal program and provided to the Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel. The information was described by the Panel as beneficial to the process of discussing and evaluating the various concerns. The Panel suggested, prior to its conclusion, that the background material be provided on the coastal program homepage to allow the information to reach a broader audience. The coastal program is in the process of finalizing the back ground materials that where compiled in a document titled, NORTHWEST INDIANA PUBLIC WORK GROUPS: A SYNTHESIS OF MAJOR TOPICS IN THE LAKE MICHIGAN COASTAL AREA, so that the information may be placed on the Internet.

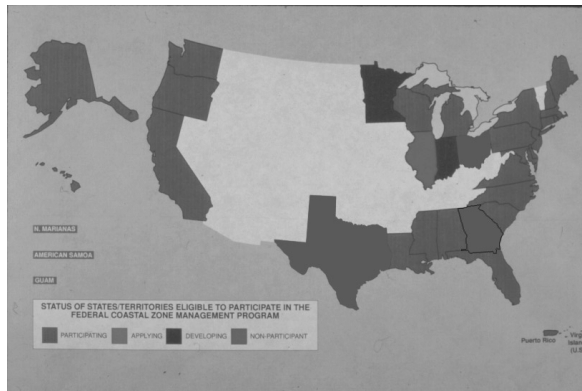


## Resolution on Innovative Solutions

“ . . . The Department of Natural Resources shall explore and investigate innovative methods and opportunities which may help address the requirements of Northwest Indiana. . . ”

## DNR Receives Coastal Zone Management Grant

In October 1997, the coastal program received a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to continue to explore Indiana's participation in the federal coastal zone management program. Grant funding will be allocated to identify the current frameworks Indiana uses to manage the Lake Michigan shoreline with regard to issues like shoreline erosion, nonpoint source pollution, and public access. Coastal program staff participated in the annual coastal program managers meeting hosted by NOAA to keep current on federal legislation and programs which have application to the Indiana Lake Michigan shoreline.



**Figure 3a: Status of coastal states**

## Coastal Staff Attend National Meetings

In conjunction with the federal coastal program managers meeting, coastal program staff attended the annual meeting of the Coastal States Organization. Indiana is a member of the organization which represents the governors of the 35 coastal states and territories on coastal and Great Lakes affairs. The Coastal States Organization is assisting states in communications with federal agencies regarding nonpoint source pollution control

requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act, updates being made to the federal consistency provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act, and representing the state on other issues of importance such as shoreline management by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the President's new Clean Water Action Plan.

Coastal program staff also participated in the annual Great Lakes Regional Program Managers meeting in Bayfield, Wisconsin, and a Coastal Hazard Mitigation Workshop in Traverse City, Michigan. Recently, staff attended a meeting at the Coastal Services Center in South Carolina to learn of the opportunities for technical assistance available to coastal state programs through this new service branch of NOAA.

## Geographic Information System Developed for Shoreline

The coastal program took the first step toward developing a geographic information system (GIS) for the Indiana Lake Michigan coastline during 1997. The ultimate goal of the GIS is to incorporate several existing documents of historical coastal data, and eventually new data, which will allow the DNR Lake Michigan Specialist and local land use managers to analyze coastal conditions to improve decision-making regarding coastal development, shoreline protection, and other related issues. Data such as location of seawalls, survey sites, and man-made land locations are included in the new database. Future inputs to the database are on hold until a new intermittent employee or permanent employee can be hired to continue the database development.

## Studies

Many rare and endangered plant and animal species inhabit Northwest Indiana. Funding was provided by the coastal program coastal zone management grant to the Division of Nature Preserves to evaluate the quality of the natural areas and wetlands in

Northwest Indiana. The study was actually a re-evaluation of the natural communities first inventoried in 1979 by the DNR.

The 25 priority wetlands identified twenty years ago were revisited to determine whether the wetlands had changed in terms of size, cover type, and context. The results of the study indicate, generally, the wetlands were found to be basically intact. All were still the same size as they were in 1979, and two had increased in size due to a man-made pond addition and a cropland reversion.

The re-evaluation of natural areas conducted in 1996 included approximately 60 areas. Results of last year's field inspection of high quality natural areas indicate eight areas are now protected in some fashion; six are privately owned and relatively intact; and three are considered to be eliminated. Of some of the lesser quality areas looked at in the late

1970's, five are publicly managed; fifteen are privately owned and relatively intact; and seven are eliminated. A few additional sites have been found since the 1979 inventory and of those sites, fifteen are relatively intact and four have been eliminated.

Indiana Geological Survey will be developing a GIS of the Lake Michigan watershed through a joint project between IDEM and DNR. The coastal program has contributed approximately \$11,000 of the coastal zone management grant which will allow the Geological Survey to compile data from both agencies that pertain to the land uses and environmental conditions of the land in a comprehensive GIS. The information will be made available on the Internet and designed in a user-friendly format to facilitate interaction with the data on personal computers.